

THE SKETCH AS A MEDIUM FOR STUDYING THE
MARRIED C. I. STUDENT

by

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A. B., Washburn University, 1946

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of English

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1949

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FOREWORD

The following sketches are being offered as a thesis for the degree, Master of Science, for two reasons:

- (1) To present several of the situations in which, from time to time, married "G.I." students find themselves.
- (2) To show, by example, the value of the sketch as a literary form when it is used to give a realistic picture of a given set of circumstances.

The influx of married veteran students to colleges and universities following the termination of World War II is a phenomenon that, barring another war, is not likely to be observed again in American education. What is even more remarkable is the manner in which these married students and their wives adjusted themselves to the double hazard of maintaining an often-growing family unit in the face of the multitudinous problems confronting every college student.

The files of deans and Veterans' Administration offices bulge with statistics on grades, subsistence allowances paid or due, and progress made in school; but little has been done in the field of creative writing to tell the story of these married students. The writer feels that it would be a real contribution to the total picture if he told, in part, of the struggles and triumphs, the joys and sorrows, that are constantly in attendance when one is married and going to school. Here statistics can never bring home to the reader the problems of

social adjustment, jealousies, grades, and finances that beset these married students.

Time was also a consideration. Every year sees fewer student families on the campus. Soon their experiences will be memories, and the opportunity for personal observation irrevocably past. The situations presented in the following sketches are based on actual observation and experience, and as such, are more likely to be free of nostalgia and romantic wishful thinking than sketches written several years hence that are based on memories of observations and experience.

The sketch has been chosen as the method for telling this story because the sketch, being a vignette from life, gives a truer picture than a short story with its rules of plot, climax, and denouement. The sketch is an examination of a life-situation in relation to people, and the facts are presented without attempting to bring about a pat or happy conclusion to any difficulties experienced by the several characters. For this reason, many sketches are sombre or bitter because so many of the situations in real life are rather lacking in the matters of joy and light.

The important difference between a story and a sketch is that the sketch is more likely to represent realistically life within the author's experience. In a story, the problems are clear-cut, and their solutions are equally clear-cut. In a sketch, the conflicts are presented for the reader's entertainment; and, as in real life, one problem blends into another, and none is definitely resolved. The stories in such magazines

as Harper's and Atlantic Monthly are often actually sketches; and an appreciable number of good novels are merely a series of sketches; for example: Saintree County, Huckleberry Finn, The Naked and the Dead, and All Quiet on the Western Front.

The sketch as a literary form will be used by most people only in letter or diary writing; and when the rules for sketch writing are applied to letters or diaries, the results are often real contributions to literature. It is, however, the writer's purpose to consider the sketch as a creative effort to bring to the reader a realistic picture of a segment of life in an entertaining manner. To do so, there are eight points to be considered. If these eight points are applied to personal experience and observation, they will assist materially any literate person to write interestingly:

- (1) Situation
- (2) Place
- (3) Time
- (4) Characters
- (5) Action
- (6) Mood
- (7) Purpose
- (8) Revision

Situation

It cannot be emphasized too much that successful sketch

writing must be based on personal observation and experience. One should never attempt to write outside the range of his experience. The definite situation need not have been a personal experience, but the general situation must be within the field of the author's experience if the sketch is to ring true. For example: In writing the story of a battle, the author need not have participated in an actual battle; but to write effectively, he must have had enough military experience to know terminology and the logical outcome of any predicament into which he projects the characters in his battle sketch. To further illustrate this point, there is the classic example of the story written by a student in a small-town high school in which the author has his hero walking through the Loop in Chicago, and while strolling along, noticing a girl trapped by fire in the upper story of one of the buildings. The author then has his hero seize an axe, dash upstairs, chop a hole in the wall, and rescue the maiden in distress. Disregarding the mechanical improbabilities of the story, it is not likely that there would be an axe lying around in the Loop for any casual passerby to seize in case of fire. In a town of, say, 500 people, it is quite possible there would be such an axe handy in case of an emergency. The young author was thinking in terms of his own locality, and because of his lack of experience in matters of Loop fires, failed to give authenticity to his story.

Place

It is most important that a definite name be given to the location at which the action of a sketch takes place. For instance, the statement that "the student stood on the steps of the lecture hall and watched the other students go by" leaves many questions unanswered and disturbs the reader. The statement could refer to any lecture hall, on or off any campus, in any town, any place in the world. It is just words, and does not paint a definite picture. The flavor of authenticity is given to the sentence when it is rewritten: "James Smith stood on the south steps of Anderson Hall and watched the rush of students from the three o'clock classes as they jammed the sidewalk space between Fairchild Hall and Kodak Hall."

Time

Being specific about time is just as important as being specific about place. To say "one afternoon" does not have the force, for instance, that is given by saying "one Saturday afternoon in late September;" or "four o'clock Tuesday afternoon, October 26, 1949." The author of a sketch should avoid vague statements of time. He must be specific, even to the hour, if necessary.

Characters

To be presented effectively, characters in a sketch should be given names. Names make them real. It is poor technique to say "a man and woman" or "a boy and girl." The author of a sketch should also avoid "explaining" his characters. The personality of each character should be brought out by a description of his actions, and by what he says in direct conversation. If the author explains the personality of a character, there is little more to be said, and the reader is likely to lose interest. The most effective character pictures are achieved when the author describes actions and writes dialogue so well that the reader draws his own conclusions concerning the personality of the character. It is necessary, also, for the author of a sketch to describe in some detail the physical appearance of his character. The color of the character's eyes and hair may already be pictured in the author's mind, but the reader does not have the picture. The sketch writer must draw it for him.

Action

If a sketch is being written in which a husband and wife or a boy and a girl quarrel bitterly, the whole thing falls flat if it is passed over with the statement "they quarrelled bitterly." The words of the quarrel must be given with

postures: "If I never see you again," John shouted at Mary, "it'll be a century too soon!" He wheeled about, snatched his hat from the coffee table, and rushed from the house, slamming the door behind him with finality." It would be weak and ineffective to say: "John told Mary he hoped he would never see her again, and then he left the house." By the same token, it is better to say: "Joe and Bill walked slowly across the University campus, and reluctantly ascended the steps of Fraser Hall" than it is to say: "Joe and Bill hated to go to class."

Mood

The mood of a sketch is predetermined, for the most part, by the situation. A sketch based on the inability of a father to provide enough food for his family would not sparkle with light wit and amusing dialogue. On the other hand, a sketch which uses the antics of a small child as a basis would not be likely to introduce seriously the subject of infant mortality or the struggles of an adult existence. Once established, the mood should be consistent throughout the sketch. If one mood is introduced, and is followed later in the sketch by another mood, the result is a melange that confuses and distracts the reader.

Purpose

Unlike the mood, the purpose of a sketch predetermines the situation. If an author wishes to write a sketch to amuse the reader, he must find or recall a situation that lends itself to quiet mirth. If a sketch writer desires to set a mood of melancholy, he would not be likely to choose a situation of hilarious embarrassment. Like the mood, the purpose must be consistent throughout the sketch. It can only lead to confusion if, for example, the author begins his sketch with a situation full of humor, and later twists it into a situation charged with frustration and malice.

Revision

It is said that Margaret Mitchell revised portions of Gone With the Wind as many as 70 times, and that Ernest Hemingway rewrites the first chapter of each of his books as often as 15 times. It is quite as important for the author of a sketch to rewrite and revise as it is for the author of any other literary work. In the matter of revision, a sketch may be compared with a photograph. The situation is recorded in the mind of the author as the image of a scene is recorded on the emulsion of a film. Consideration of the seven preceding points acts on the mind of the author like developing chemicals act on the film. When the general outlines of the sketch are fixed firmly in the

mind of the author, it is comparable to the finished negative of a film. The actual drafting of the sketch is like the printing of the picture. When the sketch is finished, the author has his first impressions down on paper in much the same way the photographer has the proof of his picture. Neither, however, is finished. In the case of the picture, there is retouching to be done. The one who views the picture must see it, not as the original scene actually appeared, but as it appeared to him. Every commercial photographer has had the experience of a customer saying: "this picture doesn't look a bit like me!" when, as a matter of fact, the lens of the photographer's camera faithfully recorded an indiscriminating image of the portrait subject; but it was not the image the subject thought he was seeing each morning in the mirror. The same holds true for a sketch. It must be realistic, and it must be authentic, but also it must seem to the reader to be authentic. No matter how actual an experience may have been, it receives unfavorable reader reaction if it doesn't sound plausible. The unplausible must be "retouched" out of the sketch. This "retouching" or revision is as important to a sketch as it is to a commercial portrait. A successful sketch represents many hours of revision, often of complete rewriting.

A reconsideration of the eight points just discussed will emphasize for the reader these highlights: (1) If a sketch is to be realistic, it must be based on personal experience and observation; (2) places and persons, to seem real, must be given

names; (3) the writer, to avoid vagueness, is required to be as specific concerning time as he is in naming places; (4) dialogue and action are the best means for bringing out the personality of a character in a sketch; (5) action is achieved with both dialogue and a description of action; (6) the mood is predetermined by the situation, and to avoid confusing the reader, should be consistent throughout the sketch; (7) the purpose predetermines the situation, and must be consistent throughout the sketch; (8) constant and careful revision is necessary to achieve a sketch that paints an authentic picture of life for the reader.

It is a principle of education that learning is an active process . . . that one learns by doing. The preceding eight points will assist a writer to compose a well-organized sketch, but constant writing, accompanied by repeated revision, is the only road to excellence in the field of sketch writing.

The following sketches are retouched pictures of life among the married ex-service men going to Midwestern colleges as the writer has seen them. Being married, the problems of these ex-service men are both the problems of every married couple, plus the problems of students. An effort has been made to provide an album that contains pictures of both phases, in combination, and separately.

This thesis has no footnotes or bibliography, because it is an entirely creative paper.

The following sketch was written to show the contrast between the unmarried "G.I." student who has a private income in addition to his subsistence pay and the married ex-service man student whose only income is the subsistence check he receives each month from the government.

An attempt has been made to establish a mood of melancholy by a juxtaposition of scenes . . . the cold rain outside and the warmth inside . . . the man and wife without the price of a cup of coffee and the group of college students playing the pinball machines.

WAITING

Oh, I hate to see, see that evenin' sun go d-o-o-w-n-n!
I hate to see that evenin' sun go down . . . 'Cause my baby, she
done gone left this town . . .

The young woman standing by the pinball machine near the door of the Campus Drug Store shifted the shawl-wrapped child from one arm to the other. With her free arm she settled the brown stocking cap more firmly on her head. She glanced at the juke box speaker above the front door, and then apprehensively down at the sleeping child.

"Golly, Harvey. How much longer do we have to wait for that bus?"

"Don't know, Liz. It should be here now."

Oh . . . should I feel tomorrow . . .

"Look at it rain. I'm sure glad we don't have to stand out there and wait. The baby's cold as ice. Here, feel his hand."

Harvey obediently felt the small hand that drooped from under the shawl.

"And the baby ain't the only one that's cold either. I sure wish we could afford a pair of hose for me, Harvey. These anklets ain't much protection on a night like this."

Harvey, his dark face wearing a worried frown that added a decade to his 21 or 22 years, looked down at the woman's feet. Her saddleback shoes were run over at the heels, and badly in need of cleaning. Cheap, red anklets drooped loosely over their tops. Her legs were blue with cold.

He turned his downward look at his own shoes. They were low-cut G. I. oxfords, scuffed, run down at the heels, peeling on the toes. Wool G. I. trousers, sagging from a G. I. belt, failed by more than two inches to reach the tops of the oxfords. Between the trousers and the shoe tops there was a grey expanse of quartermaster-issue wool-and-cotton socks.

"I know, Liz," he said finally. "It's tough. And I'm wondering if it'll be any damned better when I finish college . . ."

I'm goin' to pack my trunk and make my get-a-way . . . make my get-a-way . . .

Harvey absently snapped his fingers in time to the music.

"Maybe," he said reflectively, "maybe that recruiting sergeant had something . . ."

Loud laughter from across the room drew their attention. A group of a dozen young men were gathered around a battery of pinball machines. One youth in a heavy, grey trench coat and officer's pinks was the center of attention. The trench coat was unbuttoned. Under it he wore a white shirt, open at the collar. As he moved, a Phi Kappa Psi pin gleamed briefly as it caught the light from overhead.

"That's two dollars you owe me, Rodney," said a tall youth who stood near the one in the grey trench coat. "Move over, and I'll really run up a score against you this time. Double or nothing?"

"Double or nothing," said Rodney, lighting a cigarette.

"Two dollars," said Harvey flatly. "Two dollars, double or nothing."

"Yeah," said Liz. "I heard."

I got the St. Louis Blues . . . I'm just as blue as I can be . . .

"G.I. students," said Harvey bitterly. "What do guys like that need sixty-five bucks a month for?"

The baby whimpered, and Liz held it closer, whispering softly. She raised her head:

"What time is it, Harvey?"

"Must be about eight-fifteen."

"And no bus yet?"

"No bus."

Harvey felt in the pocket of his wrinkled leather jacket, and drew out a bent and twisted Chesterfield package. He felt around inside it with his index finger, then tossed the package on the floor.

"Harvey?"

"Yeah?"

"Could we maybe get a cup of coffee?"

Harvey fumbled in the watch pocket of his trousers. He dropped two coins, a dime and a nickel into the palm of his left hand and held it out for Liz to see. Then, carefully picking the coins up with his right hand he put them back into the watch pocket.

"Bus fare," he said. "That's all."

"Oh,"

Seems like that gal . . . got a heart like a stone cast in the bottom of the sea . . . else she wouldn't go . . . so far from me . . .

"Hey, Rodney, look at that!"

The tall young man at the pinball machine pointed to the brightly lighted score board. Harvey and Liz watched the group around the machine as they crowded close around the speaker and gazed at the score.

"J-o-e-sus!" said one. "That's the highest score I've ever seen on this machine."

"What kind of magnet you carrying tonight, Bud?" asked

another.

"Well," said Rodney as he dropped his half-smoked cigarette on the floor and pushed his way to the machine, "here goes four dollars or nothin'." He inserted a nickel and began playing.

"Harvey, look! Isn't that the bus coming?"

"Yeah. Sure is. Here, let me carry the baby. We gotta run for it."

Liz handed the baby to Harvey, opened the heavy door, then stepped back to let three girls pass into the store.

"Get going, Liz," said Harvey.

Liz pushed past the girls, and Harvey pushed past the girls.

"Excuse us," Harvey muttered. "We gotta catch that bus."

"That's O. K.," said one of the girls, and continued speaking to her companions " . . . and so I got the skirt for twenty-seven-fifty-two. I thought it was a real bargain . . . "

. . . and I love my baby . . . 'til the day I die . . .

The following sketch is based on an actual experience, and represents the reception married students with children receive all too often when forced to seek living quarters from private citizens.

No Room At The Inn was written to acquaint the reader with one of the larger problems facing many married veteran students . . . rapacious landlords.

The mood is one of frustration. It is set by placing the veteran in the position of being admitted to college and being unable to attend school because of circumstances beyond his control.

NO ROOM AT THE INN

The University Hill business district was crowded with the noon-day rush of enrolling students from State University. The hot September sun reflected from brightly colored sweaters and sport shirts. Liberally sprinkled among the sport shirts and sweaters were the summer sun-tan shirts and trousers of recently-discharged veterans. Long queues of students were lined up in front of each cafe and restaurant, and the doorways of the two drug stores were jammed with the flow of students in and out.

Wally Watkins turned his 1934 Chevrolet south off Richmond Street and down University Hill Drive. His wife, Joyce, six months pregnant, and their two year old son, Billy, sat in the

front seat beside him. The sleeves of Wally's sweat stained sun-tan shirt still had the dark outline of sergeant's stripes so recently removed that small threads protruded from the cloth. He spoke to Joyce without turning his head:

"The man at the University housing office said the place was down this street, close to University Hill."

"What number?" Joyce asked.

"Seven-oh-one." Wally peered from the window on his side. "This is the eight hundred block. It'll be on your side. Watch for it, will you?"

"O.K.," said Joyce. "Golly, look at all the students . . . I'm so glad you decided to go on to school, Wally . . . drive a little slower will you . . . let's see . . . eight-oh-three . . . seven-twenty-seven . . . seven seventeen . . . seven-oh-nine . . . seven-oh . . . this is it, Wally. Stop the car!"

Wally pulled up to the curb. They were in front of a long, narrow, yellow stucco house. The small lawn in front was green and closely trimmed. Heavy shrubbery grew close to both sides of the front steps and along both sides of the house.

Wally took a piece of paper from his shirt pocket and consulted it. "Yep," he said, "this is the place. Seven-oh-one University Hill Drive." He got out of the car, stretched himself to his full six, scrawny feet of height, and walked up to the front door. He looked at the paper again, and then at the house number above the door, and pushed the bell button.

The door was opened immediately by a large man in his

middle forties. He wore a white shirt opened at the neck, and grey and white striped seersucker trousers. His hair was carefully parted in the middle, and his heavy jaws were closely shaven and carefully powdered. Wally glanced quickly down at the piece of paper in his hand.

"Mr. Sugarwell?"

"Yes," said the man in the doorway in a mellow, bass voice.

"I'm Wally Watkins. Mr. Wilder up at the University housing office tells me you have a basement apartment for rent."

"Yes, I do."

"Do you rent to people with children?"

"Why, of course," said Mr. Sugarwell heartily. "Little ones have to have a place to live the same as older people."

"That," said Wally, "puts you in a class by yourself, Mr. Sugarwell."

Mr. Sugarwell smiled. "I take it that you are a new student enrolling at the University?"

"Yes," said Wally, "if I find a place to live."

Mr. Sugarwell glanced at Wally's shirt sleeve. "Just out of the army?"

"Yes. I got out about three weeks ago."

"I've been keeping this apartment for married G. I. students," said Mr. Sugarwell. "I feel it's the least I can do. Would you like to see the place?"

"Sure thing," said Wally. "You know," he continued, "of all the places I've been asking at the last five days, this is

the first time I've had a chance to see the place. They'd take one look at my kid and say 'no room here'." He turned and waved to Joyce. "Come on!" he called.

"Your family?" asked Mr. Sugarwell.

"Yes."

Joyce, carrying Billy, came slowly up the front walk. Wally and Mr. Sugarwell came down the front steps to meet her.

"Joyce, this is Mr. Sugarwell."

"How do you do," said Joyce.

"How do you do, Mrs. Watkins," said Mr. Sugarwell. He patted Billy on the head. "My, what a fine little lad. I don't suppose he cries at night any more?"

"No, he never did cry much," said Joyce.

"That's fine," said Mr. Sugarwell. "Now, if you folks will follow me, I'll show you the apartment."

Mr. Sugarwell led Wally and Joyce around the south side of the house and down a three step area-way to a screen door set into the foundation of the house, half way between the front and the back. Opening the screen door, he motioned the others ahead. Joyce went in first, followed by Wally. Wally wrinkled his nose and looked at Joyce. She, too, was sniffing. The air was heavy with the smell of a cat's unemptied sandbox.

"Whoof!" Wally gasped.

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Sugarwell, "did you say something?"

"No sir," said Wally hastily. He stepped forward to stand

beside Joyce, and bumped his head on an overhead pipe. "O-o-o-o!" he moaned.

"Little low for a tall fellow like you," said Mr. Sugarwell, laughing. He followed the others into the basement.

"Yeah," said Wally, rubbing the top of his head.

Mr. Sugarwell made a circular motion with his right hand. "This," he said, "is the kitchen."

Joyce handed the baby to Wally. Silently, they surveyed the room. It was nine feet square. To the north stood a five foot partition dividing the basement in half, lengthways. Over the top of the partition, they could see a window and the upper one-third of the other half of the basement. The east wall was formed by the side of a furnace. Pushed against the furnace was a small wood table with an electric hot plate and a tin wash basin on it. The gap between the furnace and the south wall of the basement provided a doorway into a room to the east.

Mr. Sugarwell broke the silence. "There's a toilet and a faucet on the other side of the basement," he said. "You just go out the door you came in, and go around the house and go into the basement from the other side."

"Oh," said Joyce faintly.

"Why don't you cut a door through here?" asked Wally, pointing to the five foot partition.

"We use the other side of the basement a lot ourselves," explained Mr. Sugarwell, "and we'd rather have it so people can't just run in and out all the time."

A large, white cat stalked out from behind the furnace and rubbed against Wally's leg. Wally stepped sideways to avoid the animal.

"What a beautiful cat!" exclaimed Joyce.

"Do you like cats?" asked Mr. Sugarwell.

"Very much," said Joyce. She looked at Wally. "You like them too, don't you, dear?"

"Oh, sure, sure," said Wally. "I'm nuts about them, Mr. Sugarwell." He rubbed the side of his foot gently against the cat. "See the nice kitty," he said to Billy.

"We're very fond of cats," said Mr. Sugarwell. "We keep Mercedes here and two others in the other half of the basement." He smiled at Billy. "You will have to be very gentle with them, sonny."

Wally looked down at Mercedes. "She's big enough to hold her own with a timber wolf," he said. "I don't think Billy here would be able to hurt her."

"She's grown quite large," said Mr. Sugarwell. "Now, this room over here," he continued, "is the bedroom. It used to be the coal bin, but I put in gas a couple of years ago, so I cleaned it up, and made a bedroom out of it . . . watch out for your head!"

Doubling over carefully, and holding Billy against his chest, Wally followed Mr. Sugarwell to the door, and peered over his shoulder into utter darkness.

"It's a little dark in there," said Mr. Sugarwell. "I've

never gotten around to putting a light in, but I'm going to one of these days." Turning around, he walked past Wally towards a curtained opening in the west wall of the kitchen. "In here," he said, "is the living room."

"The living room?" asked Joyce.

"Yes," said Mr. Sugarwell proudly, "and I furnish it for my renters." He pulled aside the curtain and motioned for Joyce to go in. Wally followed her into a room 20 feet long by 10 feet wide. The south and west walls were the cement walls of the foundation. The same five foot partition provided the north wall.

"You'll have to be a little careful going through the living room door," said Mr. Sugarwell. "The wall is made of composition wood, and it's not braced very good."

"Oh," said Wally, "I see."

A studio couch, covered with a dirty green curtain, stood against the west wall of the living room. Two folding chairs were open against the south wall, just under a small, dirt covered window. A card table had been placed in the center of the room. An electric light cord, terminating in an unshaded bulb, hung from the ceiling directly above the card table. The east wall was decorated with a large, framed motto: Jesus Saves. The cement floor was scantily covered with a mouldy axminster carpet.

Joyce walked to the studio couch and sat down. Wally placed Billy beside her and went over to the folding chairs. He moved

one out from the wall and sat down. Mr. Sugarwell remained standing near the card table.

"There's a light in here," said Mr. Sugarwell, pointing to the cord and bulb. "All you have to do is put an extension cord from here to the kitchen, and you got a light in there too. With the right kind of plug, you can even run the hot plate."

"That will be nice," said Joyce mildly. She twisted to make herself more comfortable on the couch.

Mr. Sugarwell glanced at her sharply. "You have only one child?" he asked.

"At present," said Wally.

"Do you plan to have any more?" Mr. Sugarwell persisted.

"We expect one in about three and a half months," said Joyce, coloring.

"I see," said Mr. Sugarwell. He rubbed the index finger of his right hand thoughtfully across his chin. "That changes things somewhat." He turned, and spoke directly to Wally. "That means your wife won't be working, doesn't it?"

"I don't imagine so," said Wally. "Why?"

"Well, the last people we had here," said Mr. Sugarwell, "left their child with a lady here in town, and were gone all day. She worked, and he went to school. That way, they didn't use much light, and there wasn't much wear and tear on the place." Mr. Sugarwell paused. "I don't imagine," he continued, "that you folks will be gone very much, will you?"

"I don't imagine so," said Joyce.

Wally took a cigarette from his shirt pocket. He fumbled

in his trousers pocket for a match.

"Do you smoke?" asked Mr. Sugarwell.

"Yes."

"You know," said Mr. Sugarwell, "smells from the basement circulate right up to the next floor . . . especially the smell of smoke."

"Is that so?" said Wally.

"Yes. It's particularly noticeable in the winter. I'm a minister," Mr. Sugarwell continued, "and I've never gotten used to the smell of cigarette smoke. I never allow it up on our floor."

"Oh," said Wally. He juggled the cigarette in his hand for a moment, and then put it back into his shirt pocket. "Tell me, Mr. Sugarwell," he said, "how much do you get for this apartment?"

"Well, now, let me see," said Mr. Sugarwell. He pursed his lips and cocked his head sideways. He held up the index finger of his right hand. "First, if you're here all the time, you'll have to have a lot of lights on . . ."

"Why, I don't know . . ." said Joyce.

"In your case," said Mr. Sugarwell, "I'd have to add a little to the rent to make up for the extra lights you'd burn . . ."

"I guess that would be O. K.," said Wally.

" . . . and then there's the matter of the little fellow," continued Mr. Sugarwell. He extended the middle finger of his right hand to emphasize his second point, and glanced at Billy

who sat placidly beside his mother.

"The little fellow?" asked Joyce.

"I'd have to have a little extra to take care of the wear and tear on the place that any boy of his age would cause."

Wally and Joyce looked at each other. Wally shifted his chair, and Joyce frowned warningly. "How . . . much extra . . . for everything?" asked Wally.

"I think fifteen dollars a month would take care of it," said Mr. Sugarwell.

"How much would that be all together?" asked Joyce.

"Sixty-five a month."

"Sixty-five a month?"

"Yes. I believe that would take care of it," said Mr. Sugarwell. He smiled. "And it's really quite reasonable. You'll have a fine roof over your heads, and I know that you get more than that on your G. I. allowance."

Wally got up and walked toward the curtained door to the kitchen. Joyce picked up Billy and followed Wally to the door. Mr. Sugarwell brought up the rear.

"Oh, golly," said Joyce, turning toward Mr. Sugarwell, "we've been looking so long for a place that would take kids, and this is the first one we've found. But sixty-five dollars . . ." her voice trailed off.

"Where are you staying now?" asked Mr. Sugarwell.

"Oh, out at the Highway Tourist Camp."

"Expensive, isn't it?" asked Mr. Sugarwell.

Joyce nodded. "Too expensive to keep on living there. We're going to have to get a place somewhere else before Wally enrolls."

Wally interrupted. "When could we move in?"

"Right away," said Mr. Sugarwell.

Wally looked at Joyce, and she shrugged. Both had memories of the housing shortage from Laurel, Maryland, to Marysville, California. "I guess this is the only place in town where we could get in," said Wally.

"I shouldn't be a bit surprised," said Mr. Sugarwell.

Wally reached into his right back pocket and took out a thin folder of traveler's checks. Mr. Sugarwell watched him carefully. Wally opened the folder and began counting checks.

"I'll have to have three months' rent in advance," said Mr. Sugarwell.

"Three months in advance!" cried Wally.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Sugarwell, smoothly. "I have to have the guarantee that you'd stay the full three months."

"Oh," said Wally quickly, "don't worry about that, as hard as places are to . . . what do you mean . . . the full three months?"

"Maybe three and a half months," said Mr. Sugarwell. "A new baby cries a great deal, and I'm afraid it would be out of the question to have one right under where we live. I just want to make sure that you'll make maxim use of the place before you move."

"Little ones," said Wally bitterly, "have to have a place to live, just like the rest of us . . . " he moved towards Mr. Sugarwell " . . . why . . . you . . . "

Joyce laid her hand on Wally's arm. "Here you take Billy. Let's go outside and talk it over before we decide."

Wally jabbed the folder of traveler's checks into his pocket and took Billy from Joyce. They walked out through the kitchen, and up the area-way to the yard. Mr. Sugarwell followed them.

"That's right," said Mr. Sugarwell. "Talk it over, and if you decide to move in, give me a ring. I'm in the 'phone book."

Neither Wally nor Joyce answered. They walked slowly toward their car. As they went down the sidewalk, they could see University Hill, two blocks north, and the college students, still lined up in front of the eating places. Beyond University Hill, the tower of the University administration building thrust its ivy-covered length above the trees, and loomed black against a white bank of clouds.

Wally broke the silence. "This does it!" he cried. "For five goddamned days we look for a place to live so I can go to school, and then when we find it that hypocritical sonofa . . . " he stopped short and shook his head in bewildered rage.

"Whatever are we going to do, Wally?"

"To hell with this place," said Wally fiercely. "I'm going down town and re-enlist!"

"Oh, no!" Joyce wailed.

Wally shrugged. He opened the car door, and after Joyce

was in and settled, he handed Billy to her. He closed the door, and rested his head against the frame of the car. Finally he spoke. "I know how you feel, honey, but what else can we do?"

"Nothing, I guess," said Joyce dully. She stared straight ahead, holding the baby tightly. Tears welled up in her eyes, and ran slowly down her cheeks.

The veteran student is often a serious fellow. It is not at all unusual for him to hold certain phases of college life in low esteem. However, his personal opinion of these particular phases does not always prevent his being exposed to them. The general picture of such an exposure is given in the sketch that follows.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

Sue Murphy finished knotting Brian's necktie. She stepped back half the length of the living room of their converted army barracks home and viewed her handiwork.

"You look sharp, honey," she said, brushing a lock of blond hair back from her face.

Brian grinned. "Shrewd's the word they use at this school to describe my present state of elegance."

"Well, shrewd or sharp, you're a smooth number, Brian Murphy."

Sue cocked her head to one side and looked him over slowly, from head to foot. She saw a black haired young man, six feet tall, built along lines popularly known as athletic. The sloping shoulders of his heather blue sports jacket advertised its Brooks Brothers origin. His trousers were grey flannel, and sharply pressed. The perfect triangle of the windsor knot in his black, knitted tie set off the gleaming white of his shirt.

A long nose, meeting a straight, black bar of eyebrows formed a T in the middle of his thin, oval face. His eyes were long lashed and cobalt blue.

"Golly," Sue continued, "we're lucky to have somebody from back home like Tom to introduce you to a fraternity. I hope the fellows at the fraternity like you."

"I really don't care very much," said Brian indifferently, "whether they do or not."

"You do so too!" cried Sue. "College just isn't college unless a man belongs to a fraternity."

"Say . . . I believe you really want me to join."

"I think it would be wonderful," said Sue earnestly.

"Anything for you, honey," said Brian lightly. "Say, what time is it?"

Sue glanced at her wrist watch. "Seven-thirty."

"Tom ought to be along any minute now."

"Why didn't he take you up to the house for dinner?"

"He had to work late at the student union."

"What does he do there?"

"He's the manager, I believe. There's a horn honking now . . ." Brian walked to one of the two windows flanking the front door and looked out. "It's Tom. I'll go out and save him a trip to the door. See you later."

"Have fun, honey . . . gee, I hope you make it . . ."

"Don't let it bother you, Sue, honey. I'm not worried. see you." He kissed her quickly, went out the door, and down

the short walk to the street where Tom Whitman was waiting in a new 1947 Chevrolet convertible. The windshield of the car was decorated with the Greek initials of the Lambda Kappa Theta fraternity, and the top was down. Tom, a pleasant faced boy in his late teens waved as Brian came down the sidewalk.

"Hiya, Brian. Did I keep you waiting?"

Brian opened the door and got in. "Hello, Tom. You're right on time. How are you?"

"Pretty shrewd," said Tom. He took out a package of Chesterfields and passed them to Brian. Brian took one and handed the package back to Tom. Tom punched the lighter in on the dashboard, and when it snapped out, gave Brian a light. He then took a cigarette himself, and lit it.

"Thank you," said Brian.

"Sure thing," said Tom. He started the car, turned around in the middle of the street, and drove south to the end of the block where Second Street and Richmond Avenue meet. He turned west on Richmond and drove rapidly towards University Hill. "You're looking mighty shrewd, Brian," he said, glancing at his companion.

"Why, thank you, Tom."

"That looks like a Brooks Brothers jacket."

"It is."

"I think I'll get one when I'm home for Christmas," said Tom, looking down briefly at his own well-cut maroon flannel jacket.

Brian didn't answer. He took a long drag on his cigarette and inhaled deeply. He exhaled, and flipped the cigarette away.

Tom drove through University Hill, and past the south end of the University campus. Two blocks beyond the tennis courts, he turned south up the steep grade of Pembroke Lane.

A blue, smokey, mid-September twilight shrouded the pseudo-everything style fraternity houses lining both sides of the street. Among the faculty and town's folk, this part of University City was known as Mt. Olympus. Lights gleamed through leaded-glass windows, and reflected from the highly polished surfaces of canary yellow convertibles and somber, black family sedans.

"Our house is right on top of the hill," said Tom.

"That should give you a nice view."

"It also makes our house the highest of any here at school," said Tom proudly.

"So?"

"We had a survey run last summer," said Tom defensively, "and we can prove it."

Brian smiled briefly. "That's nice," he murmured.

"Well, here we are," said Tom. Coming to the crest of the hill, Tom made a U-turn, and backed the car into a space directly in front of the fraternity house. He switched off the motor, and he and Brian got out.

Inside the Lambda Kappa Theta house, post rush week prospects were being given the once over by the 87 actives.

Dinner was over, and guests, actives, and pledges were gathered in the long living room that ran two-thirds the length of the house from south to north.

Joe Goodman, current rush chairman, stood in front of the dressed stone fireplace that occupied over a hundred square feet of space against the west wall of the living room. Raising his voice above the strains of a be-bop record on the player across the room, Joe explained the advantages of belonging to Lambda Kappa Theta to the five guests.

"Lambda Theta is a mighty shrewd fraternity, fellows," said Joe. "We're the only house on the hill that has its coat-of-arms moulded right into the fireplace." He stepped aside so that the guests could better see the elaborate shield and scroll set into the front of the fireplace, just beneath the cement mantel.

"Most houses," Joe continued, "are satisfied to hang a skin above the fireplace, but we . . ."

The French doors leading into the main hallway from the north end of the living room opened with a bang. Tom and Brian walked in. Tom waved to Joe.

"Hi, boy. Sorry we're late. I had to stay on duty to-night."

"That's O.K.," said Joe. He turned to the guests. "Excuse me a minute, will you?" He walked forward to meet Tom and Brian.

"Joe," said Tom, "this is Brian Murphy. Brian, this is Joe

Goodman, our rush chairman."

"How do you do, Brian?" Joe shook hands. "I'm glad you could be with us this evening."

"How do you do," said Brian.

"Brian," said Joe, placing his hand on Brian's arm, "there are some guests over here I'd like to have you meet." Brian, Joe, and Tom walked towards the fireplace.

"Fellows," said Joe, "I'd like to have you meet Brian Murphy. Brian, this is Rod Ellis, Bud Audrey, Burl Eavens, Clyde Allison, and Roger Peet."

"How do you do," said Brian.

"Hiya," chorused the five.

"I was just telling them a little about Lambda Kappa Theta," said Joe. "Would you like to get in on it?"

"Surely."

"Well," said Joe, "I guess you've all noticed the cups we have here on the mantel." He pointed to a dozen or so silver-plated loving cups lined up on top the fireplace. "Well," he continued, "this first one here, we won when we clipped the Betas last year in intramural football. They have some pretty shrewd boys down there at the Beta house. Not a thing wrong with them. It's just that we always win the cup from them." Joe smiled. Tom smiled, and nudged Brian.

"These other cups," explained Joe, "were won with homecoming floats, baseball, and basketball. That big one there in the center is for having the most beautiful man on the campus. We

won it so often, we have it for keeps now." He paused. "Do you fellows have any questions? No? Well, I'd like to have you meet some more of our members. Tom, I'll take this group, and you take Brian. See you later, Brian," he continued, laying his hand briefly on Brian's shoulder.

"Thank you," said Brian.

"There are some men over here I'd like to have you meet," said Tom. "They're pretty important fellows on the campus."

Tom and Brian walked over to a small group of men standing near the long, double windows that took up the wall space from the fireplace to the south end of the room. Each of the men in the group wore the collegiate uniform of sports jacket and contrasting slacks, and each had the stamp of high bred assurance on his face that invariably accompanies social position in the community. Their indifferent glances rested briefly on the approaching pair, and passed on. Tom and Brian stopped in front of them.

"Fellows," said Tom, "I'd like to have you meet Brian Murphy from Boston. Brian, this is Joe Rader, Kurt Mendenhall, Harold Beeler, and Brad Moser. Brad here is our social secretary."

"How do you do," said Brian. He shook hands briefly with each one.

"I had to stay on duty tonight," explained Tom, "or we'd been here for dinner."

"Say, Murphy," said Mendenhall, "are you married?"

"Yes."

"Too bad. Moser here could fix you up with some really shrewd women if you were single." Mendenhall paused and lit a cigarette. "Could anyway, I guess."

"No thank you," said Brian pleasantly. "I'm quite happy with what I have."

"Beeler here is our pride and joy, Brian," said Tom. "Did you see him play last Saturday?"

"Yes," said Brian. "Good game."

"Rader, here, is on the Student Governing Association. He was voted the most popular man on the campus last spring."

"Oh?"

"Mendenhall has lettered in both basketball and track."

"So?"

"How do you like our setup here, Murphy?" asked Beeler.

"You surely have a fine house," said Brian.

"And a fine group of men too," said Moser. "We got a lot of really important men in this organization."

"I've liked the ones I've gotten to know," said Brian.

"So, you're from Boston?" asked Rader.

"Yes."

"I never got to there," offered Beeler, "but I was to Buffalo once. What a town!" He smacked his lips.

"Whatcha do in Boston?" asked Mendenhall.

"Well, I haven't lived there for a long time . . ."

"But you just said . . ."

"My wife comes from Boston," explained Brian evenly. "I just got out of the army before I came out here to school this fall."

Joe Goodman joined the group by the window. "You making out O.K. Brian?" he asked.

"Murphy here just got out of the army," said Moser.

"Boeler and I were in the Army," said Joe.

"What division were you with?" asked Brian.

"Oh," said Joe, "I wasn't with a division. I was a staff officer in the War Department."

"The Pentagon?"

"Yes."

"He wrote regulations and directives," said Moser.

"Oh," said Brian. "A.G."

"Why . . ." Joe bit his lower lip and looked at Brian with unfriendly eyes. "Yes, I was . . ."

"I didn't know," said Brian thoughtfully, "that A.G. officers were staff . . ."

"I was an I. and E. officer," said Boeler quickly. "Had a year and a half in the Pacific."

"Boeler came home a major," said Tom.

"We have more reserve officers than any other house on the hill," said Moser.

"What branch were you with, Murphy?" asked Boeler.

"Infantry."

"Overseas?"

"Yes," said Brian shortly. He accepted a cigarette from Tom, and a light from Mendenhall.

"How long?" asked Deeler with a nod and a wink towards the group.

"Four years." The corners of Brian's mouth turned down.

"J-e-e-zus!" said Deeler, his smile gone. "Four years. What theater?"

"Both of them," said Brian.

"I told you about the ribbons he has," said Tom. "He's got ten of them. The Silver Star, the Legion of . . ."

"Could you stand up under the weight of the brass on your shoulders?" asked Mendenhall. The others laughed.

Brian smiled thinly. "That," he said, "never bothered me very much. I was a sergeant."

"A sergeant?" asked Moser sharply.

"Oh, a first sergeant before I got out."

Moser turned towards Tom. "I thought you said . . ."

"He has the Silver St . . . " The moment was awkward.

"Tom," said Mendenhall, "why don't you take Murphy over and show him our record library."

"Sure," said Tom. "Come along, Brian. Say," he continued, as they walked away from the group by the window, "were you really just a sergeant with all those ribbons?"

"Sure. What were you?"

"You know damned well I wasn't old enough to be in."

Brian laughed, and snubbed out his cigarette in an ashtray

on top the radio-phonograph. "I was just kidding you, Tom," he said.

"Sure," said Tom. He pointed to a large cabinet standing close to the radio-phonograph. "We got our records in there if you want to look at them."

"Pretty cabinet," said Brian.

"Yeah," said Tom absently. He took out his cigarettes, selected one with care, put it in his mouth, and returned the pack to his jacket pocket. He searched his pockets for a match. Finding none, he took the cigarette from his mouth and dropped it into the ash tray where Brian had recently snubbed out his cigarette.

"How many records do you have here?" asked Brian.

"I don't know," said Tom shortly.

"Didn't they make you learn that when you were a pledge?"

"Why no, of course . . ." Tom stopped. His neck and face grew red. "Look, Brian . . ."

"Brian. Tom." Joe Goodman walked up to them. He motioned them close together, and placed his hand on Brian's arm.

"Brian," he continued, "were all those ribbons you won combat ribbons?"

"Five of them were. Why?"

"Just wondered. That's about all of them, isn't it?"

"Oh, there's still the DSC and the Congressional Medal. But give me time and another war and . . ."

"Well, look, Brian," said Joe, "why don't you and your

wife come over Sunday for dinner. Tom here will pick you up."

"Sure thing," said Tom quickly.

"Why . . . thank you very much," said Brian.

"Fine," said Goodman, giving Brian a light pat on the shoulder. We'll be looking forward to seeing you again. You're taking Brian home, aren't you Tom?"

"Why, yes," said Tom.

"Fine, that's swell. Would you mind picking up a pack of Luckies for me on the way back?"

"Sure, Joe."

"Well, goodnight, Brian. We'll be seeing you Sunday."

"Goodnight," said Brian.

He and Tom walked the length of the living room, past the five guests, who nodded and smiled, past and around most of the 87 actives, and out through the French doors. They quickly walked the length of the oak-beamed hallway, and through the iron studded front door into the warm night.

"Beautiful night for snipers," said Brian, looking up at the full moon in the sky overhead.

"Sure is bright enough," said Tom. He took out his pack of Chesterfields and extended it towards Brian.

"No thanks," said Brian. "I've smoked enough for one evening."

Tom dropped the package back into his jacket pocket and went down the three front steps, followed by Brian. They walked down the winding flagstone path to the curb. Opening the right

hand door, Tom slid over under the wheel. Brian got in and closed the door. Tom started the motor, and eased the car expertly out of the parking space.

"Well, Brian, what do you think of them?"

"Think of them?"

"Of the men. Of the fraternity."

"Why . . . they're O.K., I guess."

"Finest group of men on the hill," said Tom. He turned east on Richmond and slowed down. "Look up there at our house," he said. "It's the highest one on the hill."

"Yes, I know."

"We've got a mighty shrewd group too. We got more campus leaders than any other fraternity here."

"That's what I understand," said Brian.

Tom drove on, without speaking further, past the University and through University Hill. As they approached the corner of Second and Richmond, Brian broke the silence:

"Tell me, Tom," he said, "do any of the other fraternities have members who've been decorated with the Silver Star?"

"Never heard of any, why?"

"I just wondered. Say, why don't you let me out here. It'll save you having to turn around."

"O.K." Tom pulled over to the curb at the corner of Second and Richmond. Brian opened the door and slid out. "I'll stop by for you about twelve-thirty Sunday," said Tom.

"Thank you. Good-night, Tom."

"So long," Tom shifted gears and drove around the corner south towards town.

Brian walked rapidly north past the row of converted army barracks facing west on Second Street. When he came to the third one from the north end, he turned, and going to the middle apartment, opened the door and walked in. Sue was sitting on the day-bed against the east wall.

"Why, hello, honey," she said. "You're home early, aren't you?"

"Am I?" said Brian. He walked to the single chair against the south wall of the room, and sat down.

"How did you like the fraternity, dear?" asked Sue.

"O. K., I guess." It makes our house the highest on the hill . . . we had a survey last summer and we can prove it.

Sue smiled. "I know you'll like belonging to a frat," she said. "You bought such nice clothes when you got out of the army, and you got such nice manners, and you won't have any trouble making your grades."

"You make me sound like a good bet," said Brian. That big one there in the center is for having the most beautiful man on the campus . . . there are some men over here I'd like to have you meet . . . they're pretty important fellows on the campus.

"An odds-on favourite with this gal."

"Oh, I'm a shrewd number I am," said Brian. We have more reserve officers than any other house on the hill . . . I was a staff officer . . . I was an I and E officer . . . Reeler came

have a major . . .

Sue giggled. "Golly, it'll seem funny to get into a formal and go to a fraternity dance."

"You're too beautiful to be funny, even in a formal."
were all these ribbons you won combat ribbons . . . college just
isn't college unless a man belongs to a fraternity . . . gee I
hope you make it . . . we're lucky to have somebody from back
home like Tom to introduce you to a fraternity . . . I hope the
fellows like you . . .

"You're going to have to get a tux, honey. I bet you'll look like a million in it."

A sergeant . . . I thought you said . . . Ah the hell with
it all . . . "I don't think I'll do any worrying about a tux, Sue honey."

Sue's smile crumpled and faded. "Honey, what's wrong. Aren't you . . . ?"

Brian got up, took off his jacket, and loosened the knot of his tie. He walked over to Sue and rubbed his right hand gently over the top of her head. "There's nothing wrong, honey," he said. "Not a single, solitary thing."

Children create situations without regard for the activities of their parents. Children of G.I.'s are the same, generally, as the children of parents in any other category.

Happy Easter and Yesterday and Tomorrow are written in a satirical mood, but they are based on actual occurrences, and further illustrate the complexities, in addition to classroom problems, with which the married student must deal.

HAPPY EASTER

Up until the Saturday before Easter, George Collins, G.I. sophomore at State University, had thought his family would manage to get through the Easter holidays with a minimum of complications.

Micky, age 5, and Verna, age 20 months, were safely in bed with bad colds. Eva, his wife, was too busy with sulfa pills and Kleenex even to think about an Easter hat; and George was happily at work on two overdue English themes and an overdue problem in machine design. Then, at breakfast time, Saturday morning, Eva lowered the boom.

"Darling," she said, "I think it would be awfully nice if we got the children an Easter rabbit."

George drained his cup of coffee. "No," he said.

"But they have some awfully nice ones advertised here in

the Evening Chronicle. See?" She held up the paper opened to the classified section.

George took a deep breath, and let it out slowly. "When did you look those up?"

"Oh, about five this morning, when I was up with the children."

"Look, dear," said George reasonably, "we've no place to keep a rabbit. We don't know what they eat. They're stupid, and their only value is food value. I'll tell you what . . . " his face brightened . . . "let's get a dog instead."

"You know I'm allergic to dogs," said Eva. "Besides, dogs don't lay Easter eggs."

"Neither do rabbits," George reminded her. "Furthermore, I don't believe in children's being taught such tripe."

"It isn't tripe . . . " Eva paused as the sound of prolonged coughing came from the direction of the bed room where Micky and Verna were being vaporized for their colds. George and Eva winced in unison.

"The poor little tykes," said Eva, "they'd get such a kick from an Easter bunny." She sighed. "But I don't suppose it will make much difference if they get one or not." She paused to listen to another spasm of coughing. "Honey," she continued, "didn't your father ever bring you things when you were sick?"

George pushed back his chair and got up from the table. After seven years of married life, in conjunction with military service, he knew when a battle was lost. "Give me the paper,"

he said, "and I'll go out and see what I can find."

Eva handed him the Evening Chronicle. "I marked some of the ads," she said, "and I think the one down on Freestone might be all right. It's the closest."

George looked at the paper. It was folded open to the classified ad section, and one ad was circled with a pencil and heavily underlined: Easter bunnies for sale. Come and get yours before they are all gone. Multiply your Easter pleasure with a cute, cuddly Easter bunny. Two dollars up. 1172 Freestone.

"Two dollars up!" George cried. "Why, for two dollars we can even get a steak! Why, two dollars for a rabbit is down-right . . ."

"I thought we'd call him Harvey," said Eva.

"Harvey!" George asserted. "If I pay two dollars for a rabbit, I will not . . ."

Both children coughed again . . . hard, choking coughs. George gave Eva a perfunctory kiss, stuck the newspaper in his hip pocket, and hurried out of the barracks to their ancient Hudson sedan.

Eleven seventy-two Freestone did not look like the home of somebody who would sell Easter rabbits. It was a large, substantial house, with grass and neatly trimmed shrubbery growing in the front yard. George looked at the ad again. Eleven seventy-two Freestone it was. He got out of the car and walked around to the back of the house.

There, row on row, were boxes with wire net fronts and bottoms. Each box was supported by a stand four feet high. Inside the boxes were rabbits . . . big rabbits, little rabbits, white rabbits, black rabbits . . . and loering at George through the netting of the box nearest him was a huge piebald rabbit with pink eyes and a black nose.

My God, George thought. Multiply by ten, and then by twelve, divide by the period of gestation, and multiply by two dollars . . . no wonder the house looks so nice.

"Can I help ya, bud?"

George turned and saw an old man dressed in blue overalls and a grey work shirt. A hand-rolled cigarette sprawled from the left corner of his mouth, and his nose wiggled up and down the same way a rabbit's nose wiggles.

"Why, yes, you can," said George. "I'm looking for a two dollar rabbit for my children."

The old man shuffled over to a cage in the center of the first row. "Two dollar ones are right in here," he said. "Just reach in and get the one ya want."

George walked over to the cage and peered inside. Three medium sized white rabbits peered back. They seemed docile. In fact, they seemed downright docant. George was disappointed. He knew Micky and Verna would want some action in their rabbit. George always thought of "frisky" and "rabbit" as being the same thing.

Opening the wire door, George tentatively stuck his right

hand into the cage. The three rabbits sidled away. He reached in a little farther. The rabbits sidled some more. Blindly, he grabbed.

"Ow!" he cried. He jerked his hand out of the cage. Blood oozed from three deep scratches across his wrist.

"Scratched ya, didn't he?" cackled the old man.

George glared at him, and sucked the scratches.

"Pick 'em up by the loose skin on the back," advised the old man. "Then ya won't get scratched."

George reached gingerly into the cage again. One rabbit, more stupid, or more resigned, than the other two, huddled into a corner. George got a death grip on the rabbit's back, half way between the ears and the tail. The rabbit sat quietly.

"Come here, Harvey," George said, and hauled him out of the cage. He closed the cage door, and fumbled with his left hand until he got his pocketbook out. He handed it to the old man.

"Take out two dollars," George said.

The old man took out the bills. He folded the pocketbook on the remaining dollar bill and handed it back to George.

"Feed 'em rolled oats," said the old man. "Rolled oats and plenty of water."

George nodded his thanks and started for the front of the house. He had taken three steps when Harvey began struggling. George grasped the rabbit more firmly with his right hand. He placed his left hand under the struggling animal . . . a tactical error. Harvey raked the claws of both back feet across

George's left wrist. George yelped with pain and dropped Harvey.

Harvey hit the ground with all four feet moving and scuttled towards the tulip bed next to the back porch steps. Swearing wildly, George scrambled after him. As Harvey dodged among the tulips, George made a flying tackle, and arose with Harvey grasped firmly by the ears in one hand, and a tulip plant, complete with bulb, triumphantly grasped in the other hand. Discounting a triangular tear in his right trouser leg, through which his knee showed, raw and bleeding, George was again master of the situation.

"Mustn't pick rabbits up by the ears," called the old man. "Only by the skin on their backs."

Silently, George handed the old man the tulip plant, and still holding Harvey by the ears, limped to the car. He dropped the now quiet rabbit on the floor of the back seat and drove back to the barracks. Leaving Harvey in the car, George went in.

"Did you get it?" asked Eva.

"Yes," said George grimly. He held up his lacerated wrists. "And this, too." He pointed to the tear in his trouser leg.

"How in the world did you ever do that?" asked Eva.

"That d . . ." George glanced towards the bedroom and lowered his voice. "That damned rabbit," he said. "Where's the iodine?"

"Out in the kitchen," said Eva. "I'll get it." She quickly

returned with the medicine. Kneeling down, she began applying it to George's knee. "What did you ever do to that poor little rabbit to make it do this to you?" she asked.

"What did I do to the rabbit . . . ouch . . . I'll have you know . . . do you have to put so much iodine on . . . that rabbit is a dangerous beast to have around . . . "

"Hold out your arms," said Eva arising, "and quit talking such nonsense."

"I tell you," said George earnestly, "that Harvey is vicious . . . hey, don't put any more on there . . . and I'm in favor of cooking him for supper . . . for two dollars . . . "

"There," said Eva, putting the cork back into the iodine bottle, "now you're all protected against the nasty old germs. Come on, let's get the rabbit."

Together, they went out to the car. George opened the back door two inches. Harvey was huddled against the opposite side.

"I see you're going to have to clean out the back of the car," said Eva.

"And while we're at it," muttered George, "let's clean the rabbit."

"Oh, stop it," snapped Eva. "Come on, let's get the rabbit out and take it to the children."

George eyed Harvey. Harvey laid back his ears and eyed George. George reached towards Harvey. Harvey edged away.

"For heaven's sake," said Eva, "a person would think you

were scared of the poor little rabbit." She pushed George aside and reached into the car.

"Look out!" George warned.

"Poor little bunny," Eva cooed, completely ignoring George.

"His name is Harvey," George reminded her.

"I'm not going to hurt you, bunny," said Eva softly. "Come here." She grasped Harvey by the scruff of his neck, and gently eased him out of the car. "Why, you poor little fellow. You're trembling all over. What have they been doing to you?" She gave George a hard look.

"He's probably getting ready to scratch you," George offered hopefully.

"Why, he's gentle as a lamb," said Eva. Holding the rabbit as if it were a baby, she walked into the barracks. George followed her, hoping Harvey would get away and provide an excuse for getting his head kicked off. But Harvey might just as well have been stuffed. He lay quietly in Eva's arms and never moved so much as one paw.

The little procession moved into the bedroom. Verna lay curled up in one corner of her crib, fast asleep; but Micky, alternately wheezing and coughing, sat propped up by pillows and peered at them through a haze of steam from the vaporizer. He held a funny book in his hand. Seeing Harvey, Micky stiffened with interest.

"See what we've brought you," said Eva brightly. "An Easter bunny." She placed Harvey on the bed where he sat quietly,

moving only the tip of his nose.

"Easter bunny?" asked Micky.

"Yes, dear," said Eva, "an Easter bunny. He's going to lay Easter eggs for you and Verna."

"Lay Easter eggs?" wheezed Micky doubtfully.

"Yes, dear," said Eva. "He's going to lay Easter eggs all over the house for you kids to find tomorrow."

"Won't that be fun?" George chimed in.

Micky began coughing, and between coughs he eyed the rabbit.

"Well, fellow, what do you think of him?" asked George.

Micky picked up his funny book and began looking at it. Eva and George looked at each other. George shrugged. Eva made another try.

"Don't you want the Easter bunny to lay Easter eggs for you tomorrow?" she asked.

Micky coughed again. "Can't (cough) lay eggs, (cough) mummy," he gasped.

"WHY?" George and Eva cried in unison.

"Only (cough) chickens (cough) lay eggs, mummy (cough,) (cough)."

Eva looked at George. George looked at the hole in his trouser leg. Harvey and Micky looked at each other.

"It shouldn't," said George sadly, "happen to the Bunsteads."

Without bothering to answer, Eva walked out of the bedroom. She returned in a moment with a wastepaper basket. She picked Harvey up by the ears and dropped him into the basket. Taking

one of the pillows from behind Micky, she quickly stuffed it on top of the rabbit, and handed the basket to George.

"Are we going to eat . . ." George stopped as he noticed the look on her face. Eva left the bedroom, and George followed her. At the door he looked back at Micky. Micky's head was buried in the comic book.

George walked out to the kitchen where Eva was studiously occupied with pots and pans. He opened the back door, and stepped out into their small back yard. In the yard next to theirs, George saw Lucymay Griffith, the three year old daughter of their next door neighbors, playing in her sandpile. George walked over to the fence.

"Look, honey, here's an Easter bunny, just for you." He turned the wastepaper basket upside down, pulled out the pillow, and dumped Harvey on the ground, and on the other side of the fence. Then he quickly went back to his own apartment.

He saw Lucymay's father out burning trash the next morning. Ordinarily, the two men were on very good terms. "Happy Easter, Jerry," George called to him.

Jerry didn't answer. And as he threw an empty rolled oats box into the trash burner, George saw that both his wrists were heavily bandaged.

YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

Supper was over in barracks T-358-A, Kampus Kourts, University City. Carl Foster, junior in Business Administration at State University, was enjoying a cigarette and the Evening Chronicle in the combination dining room-living room. Maureen Foster walked into the room, took off her apron, smoothed her blond hair, and sat down on the studio couch.

"Carl," she said, "there's something that you are going to have to explain to Tony."

Carl snubbed out his cigarette and dropped the paper on the floor. There were overtones of panic in his voice as he spoke: "Look, honey . . . you're his mother. Tony's only four years old. I think it's a mother's place to carry on when a child's that young. Wait five or six years, and I'll take over."

"Nuts to that," snapped Maureen. "This time you're going to perform your duty as a father. You've been dodging it long enough."

Before Carl could form an adequate rebuttal, Tony came in from the bedroom. He put two toy trucks and an oil can on the newspaper, wiped his hands on Carl's trousers, and turned to his mother.

"Ask daddy, mummy?"

"Yes, dear," said Maureen. She glanced sharply at Carl. "I asked your daddy, and he's delighted to get the chance to tell you."

"But Maureen . . ."

"But nothing! You answer the child's questions for a change! I'm home all day and have to answer them by the book-full while you're loafing at the student union. It's high time you took on some of the responsibilities of parenthood."

Carl sighed. "O.K. O.K. What's on your mind, Butch?"

"Tomorrow yesterday, daddy?"

"Tomorrow yesterday? I don't get . . . honey, what in hell is he talking about?"

"He wants to know the difference between yesterday and tomorrow."

"Oh, is that all? I thought . . ."

"Yes, dear," said Maureen blandly, "that's all. Now, will you please tell him why to-day was tomorrow yesterday? He's been asking me all day, and it's driving me crazy."

"Well, son, it's this way," Carl explained. "When you go to bed tonight we say you are going to bed tonight. When you wake up in the morning, we say you went to bed last night. Tonight, when you go to bed, we say that you are going to wake up tomorrow. See?"

Carl paused hopefully. Tony's lips moved silently for five seconds, and a frown creased his forehead. Suddenly, he smiled. Carl leaned back in his chair with a satisfied smirk.

"No," said Tony.

Maureen, drawing sympathy for Carl from some unsuspected source, called Tony to her.

"Look, Tony. You remember your birthday party?"

"Sure. Lotsa cake. We sing happy birthday, don't we mummy?"

"Yes, dear. Now, your birthday party was held yesterday . . ."

"It was held three weeks ago," said Carl. "Don't confuse the child."

"Now you look here . . ." Maureen began.

"Sorry," Carl said, and hastily stooped to pick up the paper.

"Leave that paper alone and help me."

"You're doing fine," said Carl. He left the paper on the floor.

"Tony," Maureen began again, "your birthday party was yesterday. Understand?"

"No, mummy. Birthday party last night. Yesterday I go to Sunday School when it comes tomorrow."

"I'm afraid, Tony, you don't quite understand. Yesterday is past. Tomorrow is coming. Now, do you understand?"

"Yes, mummy. Now is tomorrow."

"That," said Maureen patiently, "is what we called it yesterday, dear."

"Call it yesterday?" said Tony slowly. Then he clapped his hands. Carl and Maureen smiled at each other. At last! Tony was catching on.

"Now is then!" cried Tony happily.

Maureen passed her left hand slowly across her face, and

pointed to Carl with her right hand. "Go to your father, Tony. I believe he was the one who was going to explain this to you in the first place."

Carl took a deep breath. He placed his left arm around Tony's shoulders. He held Tony's grubby little left hand in his own slightly trembling right hand.

"O.K., Tony," said Carl in his best man-to-man voice, "right now is today. When next you get up from bed, that's tomorrow. Only you call it today."

"Oh."

"Now, fellow, you tell me. When is tomorrow?"

Tony twisted free from Carl's fatherly embrace and began gathering up his toy trucks and the oil can. His face was perfectly blank.

"Come on, Tony. Tell me."

Tony looked at his father. Tony's eyes were full of wonder and sadness.

"Tomorrow never come, daddy," he said.

The Last Dance emphasizes the conflict between a materialistic and jealous wife and a husband who takes the long view, with a consideration of ultimate consequences. When such a conflict arises in the family of a veteran student, it can seriously affect his plans for a college education.

THE LAST DANCE

Bent Matton's orchestra slid smoothly from "People Might Say We're In Love" to "Home Sweet Home," the mellow honk of the saxophone carrying the melody.

From where he was sitting against the east wall of Recreation Center, Tom Morris watched the couples sitting along the north and south sides of the room get up and drift out on the dance floor. He got up and stretched.

"Well, kids," he said, "so ends the big social event of the season for the graduate students." He held out his right hand. "Come on, Josie, last dance."

Josie arose. Her ice blue, taffeta evening gown hissed softly as she moved. In the dim light, the gardenia she was wearing in her brown, carefully curled hair looked like a large, white moth. Tom turned to a slim, serious faced girl who was still seated.

"Excuse us, Bertha, will you? Sorry Robbie isn't here for

the last dance."

Bertha lifted her right hand, palm down, and motioned briefly. "I'll live. Thanks for everything, folks."

"Any time," Tom called back as he and Josie moved towards the dance floor. "Got a ride home?" Bertha nodded, and waved again.

Tom and Josie danced easily and smoothly. As they danced, Tom sang. "Be it ever so G. I., there's no place like home."

"I hate people who sing when they dance," Josie murmured. "Quit being so bright and sophisticated."

"Sorry, Honey," Tom said. "This piece always gets me. I remember once when I was overseas . . . "

The orchestra ended with a flourish and a crash of cymbals. Before the echo faded, Josie pulled away and hurried towards the door, weaving in and out through the still dancing couples. Tom stood for an instant, his arms held out in front of him. He dropped his arms to his sides quickly, a self-conscious blush running from his cheeks into his smoothly combed blond hair. Turning, he quickly followed Josie out into the hall. She was standing by the clothes rack, and had put on her red velvet evening wrap.

"Hey honey," Tom said, "what's the big rush?"

"We're paying a baby-sitter fifty cents an hour. Remember?"

"Yeah, but five more minutes . . . " Tom stopped, shrugged, and reached for his trench coat. He put it on, took Josie's beaded evening bag from the left pocket, and handed it to her.

"Here's your basic weapon, honey," he said.

"Come on," Josie said. "Let's go."

Tom pulled the belt of his trench coat through its grey plastic buckle. "O.K.," he said, "I'm ready." Josie was already walking down the hall towards the south door of the administration building. Tom caught up with her, and they walked the last 30 feet together. Pushing open the big door, Tom gasped.

"My God, look at it snow!"

"What did you expect in Kansas in December?" Josie asked.

"Not Siberia. You wait here. I'll get the car." Josie nodded, and huddled in the area-way. Tom pulled the collar of his trench coat up around his ears and ran down the steps towards the parking lot.

"What we need is huskies," Tom said as he helped Josie into the 1941 Ford coupe. Walking around the back end of the car, he stooped and knocked the snow off the license plate. He smiled briefly as he saw the "Florida," gleaming redly in the glow from the tail light.

"Poor Betsey's southern blood is just about too thin for this country," Tom said as he slipped behind the wheel. Josie shivered, but didn't answer.

Driving in low gear, Tom circled the large lawn east of the administration building and drove west, past the engineering building. He turned north on Seventeenth street, into the full force of the wind and the snow.

"It's on nights like this I wish our barracks didn't have

such a nice northerly front," he called to Josie above the sound of the storm and the laboring motor.

"We turn here," Josie said.

"Yeah, sure," Tom answered. Gunning the motor, Tom turned west off Seventeenth street, and up the sloping drive that led to Veterans' Village where a majority of the Veterans and their families lived. The driving snow did little to improve their drab monotony, Tom noted, as he drove down the village street between row after row of one story barracks.

Tom drove two blocks. He stopped across the street from barracks T-2137. Reaching over, he opened the door on Josie's side of the car.

"You go on in and pay the baby-sitter," he said. "I'll park Betsy."

"Why didn't you drive around the block so I could get out in front of the place?" Josie asked. "I'm not dressed to go wading through all that snow."

"Sorry honey. But I don't have chains, and the snow's too damned deep to do any extra driving. Hurry up. You'll catch cold."

Josie slid out of the car, holding her wrap about her shoulders, her beaded bag with her left hand, and hiking up her evening gown with her right hand. She walked carefully through the snow, and Tom watched until he saw her go up the two steps to the small landing, and open the door. Then, he drove to the end of the block, and turning south into a parking lot, parked

the car against the south end. Getting out, he bowed his head against the drive of the snow, and huffing and blowing, made his way to barracks T-2137.

He closed the door of the apartment against the steady force of the wind, and unbuckled his trench coat.

"Wow!" he exclaimed. "What a night."

Josie didn't answer. She had dropped her beaded bag on the card table that stood in the middle of the small living room, and draped her wrap over a small tricycle that was parked against the east wall, next to the bedroom door. She held her arms stiffly against the sides of her gown, and regarded Tom with narrowed green eyes. Small, mean lines framed her pretty, heavily lipsticked mouth.

Tom hung his trench coat on a nail beside the door, and loosened the knot of his tie.

"Pay the sitter?"

"Yes."

"Has she gone?"

"Yes."

"Pat all right?"

"Yes."

Tom walked towards the bedroom, pulling off his tie as he walked. "Pretty good for a graduate students' party, wasn't it?"

"You think so?" Josie asked. Her words came flat and hard.

Tom stopped at the bedroom door, and turned to look at

Josie.

"I did think so. What's eating you, anyway?" He opened the collar of his dress shirt. "For cripes sake, are you still sore about the dances I had with Bertha?"

"Oh, no."

"Well, I hope not. They were just duty dances, that's all." He pulled off his tuxedo jacket. "Besides," he continued, "I promised Robbie this afternoon that we would watch out for Bertha at the dance tonight."

"Why couldn't Robbie take her?" asked Josie. "They haven't been married that long."

"Like I told you before, honey . . . Robbie had to work at the chemistry lab tonight. He's finishing a set of experiments."

"Oh, sure." Josie walked over to a sagging overstuffed chair that occupied three-fourths of the west wall space, and sat down. She took a Spud from a pack lying on the floor beside the chair. "Give me a light," she said.

Tom held his jacket and tie in his left hand and took a box of matches from his trouser pocket with his right hand. He tossed the box to Josie. Absently, he ran his right hand through his heavy blond hair as he watched her light the cigarette. A frown formed a deep, inverted V between his light brown eyes. He opened his mouth to speak, thought better of it, and turning abruptly, walked into the bedroom.

Through the smoke of her cigarette, Josie watched him leave. She could hear him moving about in the bedroom, and she gave a

slight start when a wire hanger dropped to the floor.

"Don't wake Pat up," she called.

"I won't," Tom said, and returned to the living room. He had taken off his dress shirt and tuxedo, and was wearing a pair of wool G. I. trousers, and a pull over sweater.

"What's the idea?" asked Josie.

"Oh, I'm going to be up for a while. I have a report to write for Dr. Schoonover," said Tom.

"What did she say to you?"

"What did who . . . oh, that. Look, Josie . . . I just danced with Bertha as a courtesy . . . that's all . . . just a courtesy. We did it for Robbie. We did it, honey."

"I wish we'd stayed home," said Josie. She snuffed out her cigarette on the linoleum carpet. Pushing herself out of the chair, she dropped the stub in a small, glass ash tray on the card table, and returned to the chair. "We hardly ever go out," she said in a low, flat voice, "and when we do, you have to spoil it."

Tom didn't answer. He walked over to an unpainted pine bookshelf that stood against the north wall, next to the front door. Carefully, he examined the titles of the seven books in the case. He pulled out Freeman's Visual Education and carried it back to the card table. He dropped the book on the table, and walked into the kitchen, returning immediately with a white painted kitchen chair. Placing the chair at the table, so that it faced the north wall, he crossed over to the oil heater that

took up the space of the south wall. Steeping, he turned the heater to "high."

"Colder than Alaska outside," he said conversationally.

"Yes," said Josie angrily, "and getting colder. "Why you left a good paying job in Florida to come to this God-forsaken country, I'll never know."

"Being a salesman was no business, honey," said Tom patiently. "This was the only school that had any vacancies last August, and I want to learn a profession."

"You call teaching a profession?" asked Josie scornfully.

"Of course."

"A profession . . . ha! I've heard what teachers make. We'll be lucky to get twenty-five hundred a year."

Tom had seated himself at the card table. He picked up Visual Education, but laid it down again, unopened. He turned sideways in his chair, so that he faced Josie across the room.

"I know salaries are low when a fellow starts," he said, "but I'll have an M.S., and there's a future . . ."

"You had a future in Florida," Josie reminded him. "They were going to make you assistant sales manager at fifty-two hundred a year."

"Selling auto accessories," Tom said.

"Well . . . ?"

"But Josie . . . there's no future in that kind of work. As soon as things tighten up a little, there won't be any luxury business . . . and I'd be just another college graduate out of

a job, and with no special training. Look, honey, in school teaching . . . "

"In school teaching, in school teaching . . . " Josie nervously tapped a cigarette on the arm of her chair. "You'll teach a hundred years before you ever earn fifty-two hundred a year. Give me a light."

Tom produced a packet of paper matches from his trouser pocket, and getting up, walked over to Josie. He tore a match out, lit it, and held it to Josie's cigarette. "Maybe I won't be in the folding money, but I want a profession . . . "

"There you go again," said Josie. She blew a stream of smoke upward towards the ceiling. "You want a profession . . . " she mimicked him in a falsetto voice. "Well, did you ever think about me?"

"Of course, honey," said Tom. He dropped the burned out match in the ash tray on the card table, and sat down in the kitchen chair.

"Of course not! I'm getting fed up as hell trying to live on a hundred and ten dollars a month . . . "

"Sh-h-h-h-h! They'll hear you in the next apartment," said Tom.

"I don't care if they do!" cried Josie. There was a note of rising hysteria in her voice. "I don't like our nosy neighbors. I don't like this school. And I don't like your giving up a good job to come up here and be a . . . be a . . . damned teacher." Her voice caught.

"I know it's tough now, honey," said Tom quietly.

"Tough now!" exclaimed Josie. "And when do you think it'll ever be any better?"

"Well, I got out in the spring, and then I'll get a job for next fall . . . "

"And what do we live on in the meantime? And what'll we live on when you do get a job?"

"Don't you think that's pretty much my worry, Josie?"

"Your worry? You don't have to wear last year's dresses . . . and sit at home all day in these dog kennels . . . and listen to a lot of dizzy dames talk about breeding kids . . . and be nice to people you'd never speak to outside . . . Tom, I'm so sick and tired of this setup . . . And if you think Pat is easy to take care of, stay home a day and try it. For a three year old . . . "

"I know," said Tom uneasily.

"Sometimes I think you don't know anything," said Josie bitterly. "If you did, you wouldn't take me out to a dance, and then spend the evening dancing with another woman."

"Good God, Josie, must we go over that again?" Tom swung around in his chair and faced the card table. "Look, I've got to get at this report . . . "

Josie rose swiftly from the overstuffed chair. She dropped the stub of her second cigarette on the floor, and ground it out savagely under her right foot. She crossed to the bedroom door. Pausing to retrieve her velvet wrap, she turned towards Tom who

had taken a piece of paper from Visual Education, and was staring at it intently.

"And on top of everything else," she said angrily, "you come home and bury yourself in a book every night. You never pay any attention to me."

Tom looked up from the paper. He smiled. "Darling," he said, "my heart pays attention to you, even if I don't. I love you dearly. If I didn't, I wouldn't be doing this."

"If you loved me so dearly," Josie said, "you'd help me around the place. You don't even help with Pat. He hardly knows he has a father. I suppose," she continued bitterly, motioning at the same time towards the book, "I have that to look forward to the rest of my life."

"A teacher has to keep up on his reading," said Tom reasonably.

"Ah, nuts!" Josie went into the bedroom, slamming the door after her.

Tom stared at the door for thirty seconds. Then, he shrugged and turned his attention again to the paper he had found in Visual Education. It was a letter of transmittal, and attached to it were a form and a franked envelope.

"Those reserve officers applying for active duty," Tom read, "are advised that dependents will be permitted to accompany the officer to all theatres except Alaska."

Tom raised his eyes and saw that a fine line of snow had drifted under the front door. Outside, the north wind whooped

and whistled. Involuntarily, Tom shivered. Damn this winter weather to hell where they can use it, he thought. Looking down at the letter, he continued reading.

"Reserve officers wishing active duty will fill out the accompanying form for direct transmittal to the office of The Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D. C."

Laying down the letter, Tom made a survey of the living room. His glance rested briefly on the closed bedroom door, longer on his trench coat hanging on the nail by the front door. From where he sat, he could see the holes in the shoulder straps where his bars had been pinned. He knew the top button was chipped. It had chipped when he leaned over the rail of the transport to take a last look at the U.S. Just that morning, he had found a crumpled bit of paper in the right pocket. "Officer's Pass," it had read. "USASCOM-C Officers' Club, Yokahama."

Yokahama . . . Jap whiskey . . . the fellowship of fighting men . . . the free masonry of the armed forces . . . smoky nights filled with drinking, laughter, stories . . . the almond eyed masks that were Geisha girls . . . the good, strong talk of men in barracks and in clubs . . . the inner feeling of satisfaction a man felt when his brass was shined and his uniform clean . . .

Tom flicked a glance at the bookcase with its six remaining books. His mouth twisted downward as he looked at the lopsided overstuffed chair. Getting up from the table, he walked over to the bookcase. From the bottom shelf he took a fountain pen

and a blotter. Returning to his seat at the card table, he shoved Visual Education and Josie's beaded evening bag to the other side of the table, and pulled the form towards him. Slowly, he began to print:

Name: Morris, Thomas W. A.S.N. 01935264. Rank: 1st Lt.
 Component: ORG, AUS. Branch: Infantry. Present Address:
Barracks T-2137, Veterans' Village, Kansas State College,
Manhattan, Kansas. Theatre of Choice: Tom hesitated. A blast of wind rattled the door, and the snow hissed against the thin walls. He printed Panama. He pushed the form away from him, and capped the fountain pen. As he put the pen down, his eye caught the gleam from Josie's beaded evening bag on the other side of the table.

Sometimes I don't think you know anything. If you did you
wouldn't dance all evening with another woman . . . you'll teach
a hundred years before you earn fifty-two hundred a year . . .
Don't you ever think of me . . . I suppose I have that to look
forward to the rest of my life . . . officers . . . advised
dependents will be permitted to accompany officer to all theatres
except Alaska . . .

Tom pulled the form back to him, and uncapped his fountain pen. With quick strokes he crossed out Panama and above it he printed Alaska. He was about to push the form away again when he noticed there was still one more section to fill out: Tour of Duty. Underline One: (1) 90 days (2) Six months (3) One year (4) Indefinite. Without hesitation, Tom carefully under-

lined Indefinite.

Signing his name at the bottom of the form, Tom folded it, taking care that the edges were even, and placed it in the franked envelope. Then, he licked the flap, and sealed it. He crumpled the letter of transmittal into a small ball and stuck it into his pocket. Walking over to the bookcase, he propped the envelope on the top shelf where he couldn't help seeing it when he went out the front door in the morning.

With a light step, he walked towards the bedroom door.

The G.I. student is not the only person around a college who has double troubles because he is married and going to school. His wife has her extra problems too. In a way, it is unfortunate that colleges do not give some official recognition to the wives of graduating G.I. students.

YOU DID IT ALL

Dorothy Best leaned wearily against the east wall of the combination study and bedroom of Trailer No. 5A, Kampus Courts, University City, and gazed bleakly at the unmade bed piled high with unironed laundry.

Her brown, curly hair was tousled and uncombed, and her brown eyes drooped with weariness. An unlighted cigarette dangled from between the first and second fingers of her right hand. Dorothy sighed deeply. "My God . . . four hours more of ironing, and I promised Mrs. Smith to have it done this morning."

She walked slowly over to the bed, shoved the laundry back to clear a corner, and sat down. Taking a package of paper matches from her apron pocket she lit the cigarette and blew a long streamer of smoke towards the ceiling. As she smoked, Dorothy looked around the small room, allowing her eyes to rest momentarily on each all too familiar object.

A small let down table stood out from the west wall. The

top was two-thirds covered by a Royal portable typewriter, the remaining space taken up by a Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. On the dictionary were stacked a Wooley and Scott Handbook of Grammar; Business Law, by Langvardt, Cook, and Jones; and a Budweiser beer bottle, half full of cigarette butts. The bed on which Dorothy sat ran the width of the trailer against the north wall. A space of three feet separated the foot of the bed and the table.

The partition dividing the room from the rest of the trailer was flush with the left side of the table, and formed the south wall of the room. The outside door of the trailer was immediately to Dorothy's left. The door hung open two inches, and a steady draft from the outside banged it monotonously against the narrow, metal door jamb.

A small window above, and six inches to the right of the left down table, was covered by a tightly closed Venetian blind. In a small recess above the bed there was a copy of The Shepherd of the Hills, a day-by-day calendar showing Friday, May 27, 1949, a half used roll of toilet paper, and a pair of man's saddle leather loafers . . . much scuffed. In the small space immediately above the table hung a shallow, glass fronted box containing a Purple Heart medal and a Distinguished Service Cross.

The linoleum covered floor was thick with dust, bits of paper, and cigarette ashes. The air was thick with the smell of boiled frankfurters and tobacco smoke. From the ceiling, a turned down desk lamp, bolted to the roof plates, furnished

light from a 200-watt bulb.

"Four years ago I came here a happy bride." Dorothy's lips twitched at the cliché, even as her thoughts went back to the time when she had come to Trailer No. 5A. She had met Albert at a USO dance at Ft. Enchalade, and when, six months later, he left for overseas she was wearing his ring. Al had enrolled as a freshman at State University as soon as he had been separated from the service, and luckily got one of the trailers provided as housing for married veterans. He had hurried home, and they were married.

"We're all set, honey," he told her as they left the parsonage after the ceremony. "Our home won't be no rose covered cottage, but it's a roof over our heads. And it's got a bed and a stove."

She had laughed, thinking him gay and witty. He had looked so handsome and seemed so brave in his uniform with its staff sergeant's stripes and its three rows of brightly colored ribbons.

"Any place with you will be rose covered, darling," she said, looking up into his good natured face. She held to his arm tightly with one hand and stroked the stripes with her other. "I wonder what you'll look like in a civilian suit, honey?"

"Can't get one for love nor money," he laughed. "I'll have to take the stripes off of this one and wear it for a little while."

He'd worn it for a little while, and then for a much longer

while. Now, dyed a deep blue, it was still serving as a suit, and her wedding dress had been the last new dress she'd had. She'd ruined the skirt putting gussets in it while carrying Butch.

Dorothy dropped her smoked out cigarette on the floor and ground it under her foot. As she lifted her head, her eyes rested briefly on the Handbook of Grammar. Al, she thought, slaughtered English his freshman year with the same happy abandon he'd shown in killing Japs the year before. "I should have got the six hours credit in English," she muttered. The handbook had been resurrected to review for Al's English proficiency examination. Her head still ached as she recalled the long hours of review. Well, thank God, he'd finally passed it. She'd little guessed to what uses she'd put her two years of college.

During Al's second year, she had started taking in ironing. Prior to this, her only experience at an ironing board, aside from their simple family laundry, had been the usual school-girl sessions with handkerchiefs, slips, and formals. During the three months before Butch was born, however, she had saved enough money from ironing to pay for the confinement.

Spreading her hands, palms upward, Dorothy looked. To rest her arms, she had learned to iron with either hand, and the outside edges of both palms were heavily calloused. Her fingers, too, were calloused at the first joint, and to get her wedding and engagement rings off necessitated heavy soaping. Bed and board and ironing board, she thought. The sea of matrimony is

just a sea of unironed shirts. If I couldn't send Dutch to nursery school in the afternoons, I'd go nuts.

She picked up a white shirt from the pile of laundry to her right, noting that it was made of oxford cloth. She sighed as she thought of the effort required to iron the heavy material. She dropped the shirt back on the pile and took another cigarette and matches from her apron pocket. She lit the cigarette and sprawled back across the laundry. The only vacation I've had, she thought, was when I had the baby. Dutch had been born right at mid-semester examination time, and Al hadn't even been in the hall waiting in the traditional manner.

"Golly, honey," he said later in her hospital room, "it was just plain hell. Here I was sweating out a cost accounting exam and Dutch at the same time. I'da give anything to be here, but I just had to take that damn' exam!"

"Poor kid," she said, thinking: You had to sweat out a cost accounting exam! What course haven't you sweated out? Getting you through school is a four year's pregnancy. Aloud she said, "We'll have to time it better next time, honey."

Well, it was timed better. This time the baby would be born six months after Al was out of school, and not even C.I. pay coming in.

"I suppose," she said aloud, "I'll have to take up house cleaning on the side this time . . . unless I can persuade Al to go to graduate school."

From where she lay, she could see a dent in the metal wall

just to the right of the trailer door. The dent had been made in Al's junior year when, in a tantrum of frustration, he had thrown an ink bottle while working out a problem in the elements of statistics. The bottle hadn't broken, but something inside her had.

"Who," she demanded fiercely, "do you think you are to be losing your temper? If you're big enough to go to college, for heaven's sake act it. If anybody around here is going to throw things, it's going to be me!"

Al didn't answer. He got up and retrieved the ink bottle, and went back to work. It had been three days before she trusted herself to speak to him in other than the noncommittal words of everyday living.

Of course, she mused, there had been a few bright moments. During their first semester, Al had cleaned a yard, and they had two dollars and seventy-five cents to spare, so they went to the Military Ball. And each month they took in a show as soon as the government check arrived. The shows would be more enjoyable if they didn't have to take Dutch along, but one can't have everything.

And then there was the sudden affinity that Al had shown for business law. She smiled sardonically as she thought of it. Of course, he would have an aptitude in a field in which she was not only inept but completely uninterested. But she had no room for complaint. His A's in Business Law took the sting out of the D's he made in Cultural World.

She sat up abruptly. Ah, well, tomorrow Al graduates, and the next day we leave out little home . . . I wonder who'll use it next for Honeymoon Cottage, and I wonder where we'll be going?

She stood up, and reaching over, dropped the cigarette butt into the Budweiser beer bottle. She turned and stooped to gather up the laundry, but straightened up again as she heard a step outside.

"Here come your men, honey," a voice called.

The trailer door banged open and a tall young man came in, doubled over to avoid hitting the top of the door. Under his left arm, he carried a squirming, laughing, three year old blond miniature of himself. Under his right arm, he carried a large paper wrapped bundle. He set the small boy on the floor and tossed the bundle on the bed.

"I came home past the nursery school and brought Butch along to save you the trip," he said.

"Thanks, Al," said Dorothy shortly, patting Butch on the head.

"You know," Al said, his blue eyes shining with pride, "Butch there is getting more like me every day."

"Um," said Dorothy.

"Yes, sir," said Al, "a regular chip off the old block."

"That," said Dorothy, "is a highly original observation." She moved to the head of the bed, lifted the paper wrapped bundle over on the laundry, and sat down. Butch immediately

climbed on her lap. "What's in the bundle?" she asked.

"Just a moment, and I'll show you," said Al. In two quick strides, he crossed over to the bed and ripped the brown paper from the bundle, displaying a black robe and black tassled mortarboard. He quickly adjusted the mortarboard on his head, and slipped the robe on over his sun-tan shirt and trousers. With exaggerated, mincing steps, he turned completely around, modeling the outfit.

"How does it look, honey?" he asked.

"You wear the tassel on the right side until you've been graduated," said Dorothy.

"Thanks," said Al. He moved the tassel to the right side. "How does it look?" he asked again.

"Daddy got funny coat on, mummy," said Dutch.

"This, young man," said Al with mock seriousness, "is not funny. This shows that your old man's a college graduate."

"To the stars through difficulties," said Dorothy.

Al took off the mortarboard and dropped it on top the typewriter. Walking over to the bed, he shoved the laundry farther back into the corner and sat down beside Dorothy. "I got something else, too."

"What?"

"I've got a job, honey," said Al. "I've got a job with the accounting firm of Robohn and Glazen in St. Louis. They interviewed us last semester, and Professor Lindquist in Business Law gave me such a fine recommendation that they hired me."

"When did you find this out?" asked Dorothy faintly.

"This afternoon. Here's the letter." Al fumbled under the gown and pulled out a long envelope, folded through the center.

"Here, read it," he said, handing the envelope to Dorothy.

She took the envelope and held it unopened in her hand. Tears welled up in her eyes and trickled unnoticed down her cheeks.

"Hunny cry," said Butch.

"Why, what's wrong, honey?" said Al. "Don't you think I ought to take the job?"

"Oh, no, not that," said Dorothy hastily. She wiped her eyes with the hem of her apron. "It's just that I'm so surprised and darn happy."

Al laid his left hand clumsily on Dorothy's shoulder. "You know, honey," he said, "if it hadn't been for you, I'd never got any of this." He gestured vaguely with his right hand toward the gown and the letter. "You might not know it, honey," he continued, "but I know who got me through school, and I know just how damned hard you've had to work to do it. There've been times when I came home from school and didn't even expect to find you and Butch here any more. I wouldn't have blamed you for throwing in the sponge any time."

Dorothy shook her head in confused protest.

"Don't argue," said Al. "I know." He stood up, and turning around, gathered up the laundry.

"What are you going to do with that?" Dorothy asked.

"I'm going to take it back to Mrs. Smith and tell her you're not doing ironings any more." Still wearing the gown, and carrying the double armful of laundry, Al strode out of the trailer.

Dorothy hugged Butch a little tighter. She gazed about the room, her glance resting longest on the space where the laundry had been.

"You know, Butch," she said, "I'm going to miss this place."

CONCLUSION

The problems of life never end, but go on and on, one problem merging into the next, so that the sketch study of any life category is an endless and valuable sociological device.

The preceding six sketches are not, of course, an attempt to present a comprehensive study of the married ex-service man student and his problems. They are, however, an attempt to show the advantage of the sketch as a medium for studying life problems in terms of warm actualities rather than in terms of cold, impersonal facts and statistics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The help and encouragement given by Prof. H. W. Davis, major instructor, and head of the English Department, Kansas State College, is gratefully appreciated.

Appreciation is also expressed for the valuable criticism given by various staff members of the college, especially Mr. Lowell Brandner of the Kansas State College News Bureau.